Medicines at reasonable prices

2438. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to ensure availability of life saving drugs at reasonable prices in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether there is any difference of opinion between the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on the issue of controlling the prices of life saving drugs; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) to (d) The Government constituted a Committee under the Chairmanship of Joint Secretary (Pharma) to examine the issue of span of price control (including trade margin). Subsequently, a Task Force under the Chairmanship of Dr. Pronab Sen, Principal Advisor, Planning Commission was also constituted to explore options other than price control to make available life saving drugs at reasonable prices.

Based on the recommendations of the Committee under the Chairmanship of Joint Secretary (Pharmaceuticals) and the Task Force under the Chairmanship of Dr. Pronab Sen, Principal Advisor, Planning Commission and feedback from other stakehoders Government have formulated a draft National Pharmaceutical Policy, 2006 (Part-A- excluding pricing) which has been circulated to various stakeholders seeking their comments. Based on the comments received the Government is likely to finalize the new Policy shortly.

There is no major difference in opinion between this Ministry and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on the issue of controlling prices of life saving drugs.